



Aruba The News

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A voyage through the seas of nostalgia opens a two week retrospect of Aruban Tourism at the Radisson Resort, Casino & Spa



The 16 honorees



Twenty-five years in the tourism industry.



Fifty years working in the tourism industry of Aruba.

On July 18, 1959, the facility that is now the Radisson Aruba Resort, Casino & Spa was the first major resort to open on Palm Beach, under the name of the Aruba Caribbean Hotel. This landmark occasion is considered by most to be the true hallmark of Aruba developing an industry that has become the foundation of its economy. The gold-

en anniversary hailing a new era for Palm and Eagle Beach was celebrated with the opening of an extensive exhibition examining the developments of the island's tourism industry from the arrival of the first KLM "Snip" in 1935 to the present.

A gala evening this past Saturday in the resort, 50 years to the day after it first began

operation, commenced with the official opening of the exhibition by Minister of Tourism and Transport, Edison Briesen, and Deputy Governor of Aruba Alina "Ella" Tromp-Yazagary, accompanied by Myrna Jansen-Feliciano, Director of the Aruba Tourism Authority (ATA).

Mario Arends of the ATA traced the milestones that built an industry for which Aruba and its hospitable natives was ideally suited; developing a population of dedicated visitors that recognized and appreciated Aruba's unique qualities. Ironically, most of Aruba's initial accommodations, such as the Hotel Colombia, which originally opened as the Pension Aruba in 1924, the Hotel Caribe, opened in 1935, and the Coral Strand Hotel, opened by Chaimen Neme in 1943, which eventually became the famous Talk of the Town, were all located in or around Oranjestad.

It was the opening of the Basi Ruti Resort by Chaimen Neme in 1957, and the efforts



Radisson's Gary Jutz, ATA's Myrna Jansen, Deputy Governor Ella Tromp-Yazagary and Minister Briesen.

of Juancho Irausquin and Oscar Henriquez, which heralded the "golden age" of Aruba's tourism development and that of Palm Beach into Aruba's premiere resort area. Since then, numerous famous hospitality chains were attracted to the prospect of year-round perfect weather, a stable political environment, and a native population of happy people who were proud to share their love of their island with visitors.

The gala evening ended with the honoring of 16 individuals, some posthumously, who personally contributed to laying the foundation of what is today's tourism product. This began with Juancho Irausquin, a visionary and major driving force towards the development of tourism in the early days. Others posthumously recognized were Luis de Palm, founder of De Palm Tours, Eline Bartels-Daal, who opened the Manchebo Beach Resort, and Charlie Brouns Jr., who established the famous Charlie's Bar. Chaiben Neme who opened The Coral Strand, and Ike

Cohen, who made it famous as the Talk of the Town Resort were two legendary names in Aruba's tourism. Ike was also the founder of the Aruba Hotel and Tourism Association (AHATA), and was the first from Aruba to be named "Hotelier of the Year" by the Caribbean Hotel Association, (CHA) Accepting on behalf of Chaiben was his son Maurice, who continued the family tradition of tourism development, and was one of those honored on Saturday night.

Honorees still active in the industry included Oscar Henriquez, and Raymond Maduro, the man that brought fractional ownership to Aruba and founded Sun Development. Eduardo de Veer, who with the founding of MetaCorp and the opening of the Sonesta Resort, which is now the Renaissance, redefined downtown Oranjestad, was among those honored, as well as the team of Ramon Richardson and Harold Malmberg, who, after acquiring De Palm Tours, redefined tour operators and attractions on Aruba.

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Additionally honored were talented individuals and performers who created the shows that not only entertained, but also enlightened visitors regarding island culture. These included famed calypso singer Lloyd

Baptiste, and producer/musicians Herman Ponson, Joy Kock and Louis Pavlis. The final honorees were individuals that left their own personal stamp on Aruba's tourism, Eduardo Ellis, scion of the

famous culinary family that opened Papiamento Restaurant, and Ewald Biemans, who as owner/manager of the Bucuti Beach Resort has set standards for environmentally aware resorts, founded the AHATA Environmental Committee, and was also awarded "Hotelier of the Year" by CHA.

The exposition was designed by artist Maria Teresa Martinez and is spread over three conference rooms on the ballroom level of the Radisson resort. It is open daily from 8:00 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. and all visitors are welcome. The retrospect will continue until Saturday, August 1, and end with a gala charity event to raise funds for the Aruba Scholarship Foundation; a dinner dance harkening back to the days of Aruba's "Grand Dame," the Aruba Caribbean Resort, with formal dress and the music of that era. Tickets are on sale at the concierge desk at the Radisson Resort.